1973-2003
Celebrating Thirty Years

Editorial

As many have come before, it is now my turn to pen some words as the Executive Editor of *Microcosm*. I could tell you what an honor it is (and it truly is), but I won't. I could tell you all about the work the staff put into this edition (and they did), but I won't. I could tell you how good it felt to bear the title Executive Editor (and believe me, it did), but I won't.

Those who came before have been an inspiration for us all. As Editor of *Microcosm*, I suddenly felt a kinship with the Editors of previous years, most of whom I've never met, and one I know quite well. Specifically springing to mind is the name of one man: Daniel Holloway. I've never met this person, yet I've heard so many tales—not narrative stories about what he did, but rather, stories of who he was. He held the reins of *Microcosm* during the time that I believe it was at its peak. Like most of us, he graduated and moved on. A few years later, here I arrive at Copiah-Lincoln. Of course, I signed up for *Microcosm*. There were only four of us that year. Serving as Editor was a young lady by the name of Katherine Davis. Katie had been on staff several times and knew this Daniel Holloway. It is from what she said to me about him that I aspired to take the helm this year, with Katie now graduated. This is no power trip, ladies and gentlemen; this is the chance to be part of something grand: something that students of Copiah-Lincoln have poured their souls out on paper for. They've done this for thirty years in the hopes that some little piece of who they are finds its way to the publisher. You see, that was my second honor: not only to be Editor of *Microcosm*, but to be Editor of *Microcosm* for its Thirtieth Anniversary Edition. Yet this edition is no grander than those before. It and I have simply been one in a chain that I pray goes unbroken.

Who will come next year to serve as Editor? Who will take a place on staff? Who will muster the courage to pen his or her soul onto paper and submit it for judgment? No, my friends, *Microcosm* is not for me. It is not for the staff. Nor is it for the faculty or even those who wrote the works within (though they have more claim than the rest of us). *Microcosm* is for those who come tomorrow. I promise you it won't be easy. I promise you lots of migraines and stress. I also promise you one last thing: it is worth

more than you will realize until you see it done.

Katie Davis once said the words, "We take your dreams and publish them." But the truth is, we may publish your dreams, but this is our dream. It is this thing called *Microcosm*, a world within a world, that we hand on to you now. For me personally, this edition is my way of giving a nod of respect and thanks to Daniel and Katie, as well as holding a hand out to you.

Landon F. Stuart
Executive Editor
Microcosm 2003

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Literary Hall of Fame: Tricia Walker

I am very honored to be inducted into Copiah-Lincoln's Literary Hall of Fame in this 75th Anniversary year of the college. As a songwriter, I am doubly pleased.

The art and craft of songwriting is sometimes relegated to "secondary" status in the literary world, a sort of "common man's literature," but I would beg to differ. From my perspective, only poetry ranks ahead of songwriting in the difficult, but challenging, necessity of conveying the fullest meaning of a subject with the greatest economy of words. Songwriting, which by its definition, is half words and half music, offers a unique challenge for a writer in that it is necessary to skillfully communicate both the lyrical aspect of words as well as the unspoken content in music. A tricky discipline, to be sure. Words (and, in the songwriter's craft, music) are a powerful tool and should be treated with great respect. It is indeed true that, "the pen is mightier than the sword."

I am grateful to Copiah-Lincoln Community College, for it is there that the seeds of my future writing career began to take root and grow. Miss Julia Guess gave me a wonderful foundation in the theory of music, and the Sojourners, choir and various ensembles gave me a platform from which to spread my young musical wings. I was safe there and I was nurtured with love and encouragement, gifts that are precious to any aspiring writer or artist.

I trust and hope that Co-Lin will continue to produce young writers with big dreams that will add meaningful works of excellence to the great literary tradition of our nation and our world.

Again, thank you for this honor.

Tricia Walker (Class of '72)

The Heart of Dixie

VERSE She lived in a two-room shack
On the edge of town by the railroad tracks
She went to work for my Mamah
When they were both about sixteen
Her name was Dixie and it fit her right
She and Mamah were a lot alike
But one was black and the other white
And that's the way it was back then

VERSE When Mamah passed in '63
Dixie worked for Mama and took care of me
In my eyes she was family
But you know kids are color blind
Jesus said we were all alike
And Daddy said, "Yes, chile, but not quite"
And while I tried to figure who was right
Dixie loved me like one of her own

BRIDGE Now the only love I knew that knew no color
And the only love I knew that knew no bounds
Is living in a heart that's going under
Six feet of Mississippi ground

VERSE She came to church when I was wed
Ninety-two and almost dead
All dressed up in her Sunday best
'Cause she didn't have long to go
I remember the night she died
The angels sang and Mama cried
And Dixie crossed to the other side
When Jesus called her home

REPEAT BRIDGE

VERSE Now when I get troubled
And start feeling down
I can hear ol' Dixie's voice saying
"Baby, come here and sit down"
And I wonder if a love like that
Can still be found
Lord, I pray You'll keep
That love so pure and sweet
That I know lives deep
In the heart of Dixie

Tricia Walker

30th Anniversary Edition
1973 – 2003

Executive Editor:	Landon F. Stuart
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We lovingly dedicate
The 30th Anniversary Edition
Of ***Microcosm*** *to*
Edna Earle Crews

Microcosm Staff 2003

Fear

Amy Newell
1st Place Poetry
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

Breathing a fog of scents both candy and dirt
I lost my mind I was not alert
I drowned in deluge of pleads and yearnings
Despite my supposed wisdom and learnings

Beyond glowing amusements and solicitors' screams
Was a roller coaster towering, as high as my dreams
The terrible wails to me was a sign
That I did not belong in this riotous line

Seemingly headed toward self sacrifice
The skeletal serpent made us seem like mice.
My face projecting panic unable to mask it
I climbed in my seat like entering a casket
Mumbling a prayer that it would actually work
My neck was popped by the initial jerk
Bitterness and self-pity emerging as a frown
I began my ascent without looking down

The conspirators designed a pause at the summit
So everyone would know the severity of the plummet
With intestinal moths I comprehended my fate
In a few moments I would be dead, finished, late.

During the eternity of falling for the ground
Of terror, a new level was personally found
One thing I learned from this fall from grace
My screams are not meant to be thrown in my face.

The Slavery of Convenience

Ronnie Venable
2nd Place Poetry
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

"Most of the luxuries, and many of the so called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind." Henry David Thoreau

a window to the future or past, inevitably materialism
haunted by carcasses the Black Box stands tall and fearless
a row of gawking gatherers get brainwashed
"Sit back, relax, get fat, get lazy"

digitally the time counts down till I eat
hearing the Beep I can now enjoy
hunger pains fade, and paper plate trashed
"Accidentally, heat and eat"

portal to anyplace I Type in I can see All
kill or be killed, save or be saved
learn, lose; live, die; laugh, cry
"Gate to Anything, Anywhere, Any time"

Ceramic surrounded waterspout
Sit, wait, Flush the waste out
Abused, mistreated, hated, but forgiving
"Rid you of all incriminating evidence"

Rituals of curling, straightening, curling
Reflections cast of Vanity and insanity
rhinos don't care what they look like
"you look good, you look good, you look good"

transgressions cast into the Soapy mix
the only witness Drowned to forget

several Cycles to cast the demons out
"Sins and grins Washed away"

wasted Minutes tick away
Alarm rises me to another day
falsely we think we will always see it
"count Time spent, you will never be late"

The Story of the Past through Mother's Song

Eric Brown
3rd Place Poetry
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

The creo-line of distinction isn't controversies' worst end.
A world of false truths that just don't ever seem to give in.
Along I've awaited for the story of the past to be told to me
And it just so happened during the ninth month of Mother's Pregnancy.

Nine months in the pocket between Mother's hips I rode,
Yet slowly and silently the story of the past was being told.

She tells me:

I've crossed many rivers in my lifetime, both near and far,
but never have the racial tensions been as high as
the mountain peaks nor the Northern star.
My hair a hive of honey bees straightened by racial
tendencies; as innocence is declared, my blackness
upon was sweared.
All natural colored things are my relatives yet rainbows
and sunsets feel threatened and they can't seem
to let us live.
I do get tired and wonder when my change
is ever going to come and the pettiness of the world:
"When will it soon by over and done?" And if the sun
doesn't fall and the mountain continues to grow tall,
I know I'll get better better in all.

The memories of the past run deep within the sound of the lynch,
But the revenge of the enslaved mind inhales the poisonous stench.

As my anger mounted my questions of my future sounded,
"What is expected of me? What is my *true* goal?"

A world of false truths,
I must somehow break the mold.

My precious, precious child, all our ways are musical
yet mysterious to their culture,
So I embrace you openly with courage
for you are ripe with expectancy but do be prepared
for this world is packed with insufficiencies.
So down the hills, past the woods and through the
creek, you must move fast to reach the future's peak.

So down the hills I went and through the creek I swam
And if Masta wants to catch me he'll be Damned.
After miles of running and through water tunneling,
I finally made it to the shore where troubles of segregation
Will exist no more.

Now Mother's story has been told
And on my future I have a hold,
It wasn't all that hard
For my troubles were lifted
Once I decided to follow the
Northern star.

Now you know that the history doesn't dissolve in the blood
But in the minds of those who are willing to remember.

Toys

Debra Douglas
Honorable Mention Poetry
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

Those darn Barbie dolls all over the floor
I'd throw them away but I'd just buy her more.

Those happy meal toys that are strewn everywhere
They sure hurt my feet when I dare to go bare.

Oh and life-sized stuffed animals I thought so sweet
If I took our their stuffing they'd feel nice to my feet.

My living room wall shows Drew's artistic flair
I liked it so well I just left it there.

I open my dryer to take out my jeans
And there's a stuffed tiger smiling at me.

I don't preheat my oven without a good peek
'Cause Sponge-Bob and Legos sure make a big stink.

Shoot, how did those puzzles all get in one box?
Now Drew's crying 'cause we can't tell them apart.

Hot pink play-doh grinds hard into the rug
With finger-painted hands she gives me a hug.

I go to my tub to take a long soak
Along with 3 quacking ducks, 5 dolls, and a boat.

My big ole king bed is so full of lumps
I pretend there are no toys when I make it up.

The throw on my couch just made a move
God, if it's alive, please let it be Drew.

Illustrator: Amanda Folse

Space Shuttles

In memory of the Challenger (28 January 1986) and the Columbia (1 February 2003)

James Paul McInnis
Director of Technology, Copiah-Lincoln Community College

Space
Pulls on
Americans
Causing them to dream on about the eternity of space
Even though we once thought it impossible to break the
Sound barrier. We can now travel great distances soaring
High into the unlimited blueness of the sky flying around
Until Mother Earth calls,
Telling her little babies
That they shouldn't go
Leaping far away and
Enjoy their lives
Stuck to the soil.

Note: J. P. McInnis' poem won third place in the spring 1986 issue of Microcosm *when he was a student at the Wesson Attendance Center.*

Circumstance

Casey Hardison
Instructor,
Humanities Department,Copiah-Lincoln Community College

A shadow of a woman hiding in an alley
She picks your pocket and scrounges for food,
Seeking shelter and disappearing into the night.
She can move and speak to fool even the
Sharpest eye and make you feel her shame.
She will talk you out of money, tell you
Of her tattered life, show you who she once
Was, and cry but feel no pain while she
Lies in the street among grief and disgust.

America

Car engines buzz like bees in a hive.
Our flag flies high, fearless, and proud.
Life goes on and time is passing.
Children play by their mother's side.
And the sun looks down observing it all.
This is freedom, this is America.

Casey Hardison, a former student at Copiah-Lincoln Community College, served on the staff of Microcosm *when these two poems were published in the fall 1991 issue of* Bits & Pieces.

Just Because

Ashley Elmore
1st Place Poetry
Simpson Academy

Just because you say she's prettier
Doesn't mean I'm not
Just because you say you hate me
Doesn't mean I'm not liked
Just because you say I should stay away
Doesn't mean I can
Just because I smile
Doesn't mean I'm happy
Just because everything seems okay
Doesn't mean it is
Just because my eyes water
Doesn't mean I'm crying
Just because I left
Doesn't mean I'm gone
Just because you said forever
Doesn't mean it will last
Just because we died
Doesn't mean I won't live again

I Can Only Imagine

Natalie Stephens
2nd Place Poetry
Simpson Academy

I can only imagine
The place where I'll be -
With valleys and rivers
And drooping willow trees.

I hope it's not far
For sure I will go
Over the hilltops,
And no one will know.

I can only imagine
The flowers in bloom -
I must get there quick
Or I will be doomed.

This place is so far -
I may never make it.
I must ever be ready
For my life could be taken.

I can only imagine
That mysterious sound
Of the creek's trickling song,
And the waterfall's pound.

The smell of the grass
The sound of the birds -
Oh, how wonderful
Are those words!

Empty Cross

Kate Scoggin
3rd Place Poetry
Wesson High School

There's an empty cross at Calvary,
For Jesus isn't there.
He died, was buried, then rose again
To take our sins to bear.

There's an empty cross at Calvary,
For Jesus returned to Heaven.
To prove to those of us who care,
Of the great love He has given.

There's an empty cross at Calvary,
To prove our Jesus lives.
No greater love was ever shown,
Than the salvation that He gives.

There's an empty cross at Calvary,
Thank God, our Heavenly Father.
He gave His only begotten Son,
That we may live with Him forever.

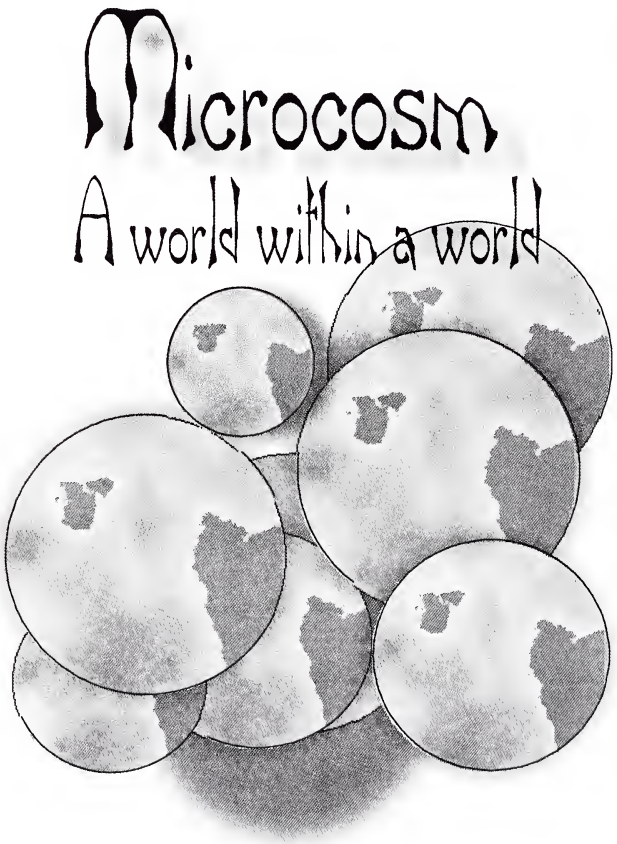
Illustrator: Jo Ann King

You and Me

Jerilynn Beall
Honorable Mention Poetry
Wesson High School

Help me through all troublesome times
Tolerate me always, even when I whine
Carry me when I'm tired of it all
Catch me when I take a fall
Hold me when I cry
And don't ever give up without a try
Warm me when I need to be warm
Protect me from all harm
Listen to whatever I have to say
Cherish me forever and a day
Look at me because you like what you see
Want to be with me...just to be
Care for me because you do
And don't ever doubt my feelings for you
Dream of me at night
Make up with me when we fight
Cheer me up when I am sad
Calm me down when I am mad
When you hear my voice, love the sound
Miss me when I'm not around
Warn me when something's wrong
Think of me when you hear our song
I'll answer any question you want to know
Keep me because you can't let me go
Trust each and every word I say
Let's grow closer day by day
Understand me when no one else does

Smile at me…just because
Surprise me when I least expect it
Guide me in each direction
Tell me your every thought
Forgive me when I'm at fault
Love me only if it's true
And believe me when I say—I love you too



Illustrator: Stevie Accardo

Settling

Michelle Wilkinson
2nd Honorable Mention Poetry
Wesson High School

Wandering from place to place,
People walk
But never picture another space,
Settling on simple things,
Never realizing their true dreams,
Living in a dull old life
Just waiting for the day to end.
When as younger people
They turned down the chance at
Building up their goals,
But who are you to judge?
They may look enviously at your money
But happiness and a family
Outdo buying fancy cars
And empty mansions,
So do you leave everything behind,
Reach your dreams without a backward glance,
Or settle for happiness and romance?
Very few can get both
And either route can be disastrous.

The Sweetest Sound

Drew Boyte
1st Place Song Lyric
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

Letting Go
Falling to the ground
Even though the fall is hard
Sometimes goodbye is the sweetest sound

Sometimes you go away
Then you come back around
I know what needs to be said
And I say it
And then I know
Goodbye is the sweetest sound

Picking up the pieces
Love is all but dead and gone
A continuous part of me
You are my never-ending song

Daddy, I Love You

Dacia Nordan
2nd Place Song Lyric
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

It all started when I was just a little girl
You use to take me fishing
You were my whole world
I always liked to do what the guys would do
All because

Chorus:
Daddy, I love you
I'm sure you know that I do
But now I'm growing up and it's just so tough
To show you day by day that I love you

I'm growing up now
We don't always get to do what we use to do
But there will always be that vow
The one I made to you

I'll be grown soon and I hope you understand
That the time we shared from noon to noon
Will always be remembered when I say

Chorus:
Daddy, I love you
I'm sure you know that I do
But now I'm growing up and it's just so tough
To show you day by day that I love you

Hate on Philtmon Dam

Tony Hill
1st Place Short Story
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

It can take years for a man to learn how to love, but in South Dakota a nine-year-old can learn to hate in just a few minutes. That's how things happen on trout streams in the Upper-Midwest; boys learn lessons as they come.

My best friend, Jerry, knew more about crappie fishing than I knew about walking. We must have spent every Saturday of summer vacation '93 sitting on the concrete banks just south of the only dam on Lake Philtmon. So, when seven A.M. on the second Saturday in June came around, Jerry was pounding on my window for me to "Get up, get up, let's go quick!" I looked through my Levolor blinds to see Jerry standing there in a Ninja Turtles t-shirt holding his rod-and-reel.

When I was nine, Shelton, South Dakota was still filled with redneck prejudice. It just never really occurred to Jerry or me for things to be any other way. Of course, lynchings were a thing of the past, but the social hindrances faced by most blacks could be almost as bad as dying. There were certain places in town that a black man couldn't walk comfortably. There were stores that "reserved the right to refuse service to niggers," but trout streams were a place generally considered neutral to blacks and whites.

Jerry and I rode our bikes five miles out to the lake, and then walked the next hundred yards or so out to the dam. Philtmon Dam was little more than a spillway that let water from the lake into the Borne River. The little spillway let out onto a giant concrete slab situated at a forty-five degree angle and covered in slick, green algae. The source of Borne River wasn't terribly wide, a good thirty yards at the most. Jerry and I would stick our butts low on the western bank and fish until hunger made the desire to be fishermen seem like a secondary endeavor.

On some of the Saturdays that we spent fishing, the boys from the Gully Gang would sit across from us and try their hand at jigging. To this day, I still don't know those boys' names. All Jerry knew about them was that they spent a good deal of their time hanging out by a big water-filled hole near the train tracks, and Jerry knew ten times more about them than I did. I knew that they were the kind of boys that my mom didn't want me talking to much, but they never bothered Jerry and me.

On that second Saturday in June, the Gully Gang boys were seated on the eastern bank doing their best to keep up with Jerry, and I was doing my best to keep up with them. We fished in relative peace for an hour or more, until Old Nigger Henderson came pedaling his bike over the horizon. He was an old black man that rode a bike everywhere he went, and he had the privilege of being one of the few blacks who could go anywhere in town. He spent most of his time digging through dumpsters for glass bottles and aluminum cans, but on that Saturday he decided to do a little relaxing with a cane pole on the concrete banks of Philtmon Dam. To get to the western bank, one had to cross the top of the dam, but when Jerry and I crossed, we made sure to do so on foot. Well, Old Nigger Henderson apparently didn't have that much sense because he didn't even slow down when he got to concrete.

I knew instinctively that something bad was about to happen. I dropped my rod and stood up. Jerry just looked up at me. Henderson's tires didn't stick as easily to the algae as they did to pavement and blacktop. His tires slipped right out from under him and he hit the concrete with a pop and a gasp that was clearly audible for the one hundred feet between him and me. He started sliding down the steep grade of the spillway, and he wasn't even struggling; he wasn't even moving. As his body floated by just a few feet away from me, I realized that he was dead and I was crying.

"Look at that dumb nigger, would you? The old bastard didn't even have time to drown." The Gully Gang was howling with the exact opposite of my reaction. The first seed of hate for a man was firmly planted in my psyche, and there it remains stolidly rooted to serve as a reminder that love and tolerance are the virtues by which a man is measured.

Jonathan Didn't Fly Very Good

Debra Douglas
2nd Place Short Story
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

Every summer our neighborhood was alive and loud with kids and almost any apparatus a kid could find to have fun with. There was a never-ending supply of playmates and for every kid who lived around there, there were exactly two dogs.

It was during the late sixties. We had a pond for catching turtles and toad frogs and tadpoles so that we could watch and learn their stages of hatching. There was a popsicle man who came twice a week, an old guy named Bob who road us on his ole nag for a dime while he smoked home-rolled cigarettes. The pool and the candy store were within biking distance. What a great time and place to be a kid.

Still the best memories and fun times were the ones that came out of our imaginations. About once a week a big group of us got together and wrote a play or some monkey show and invite our mothers to watch. We'd spent most of the day scavenging around for costumes and props. Then we'd make tickets to be delivered to all the neighbors' houses inviting them to the afternoon production.

There was nothing more rewarding than a perfect performance following such an exciting day. From time to time there were some real bloopers and blunders worth remembering. The day we discovered our buddy Jonathan couldn't fly very good was one of those days.

Jon, Marty and Tom had adorned their super-hero capes to become the starring crusaders who were to fly in and rescue the silly social ladies from one of their messes. These girls thought they could plant some flowers in a bad neighborhood, and it would suddenly be safe for a ladies' tea party.

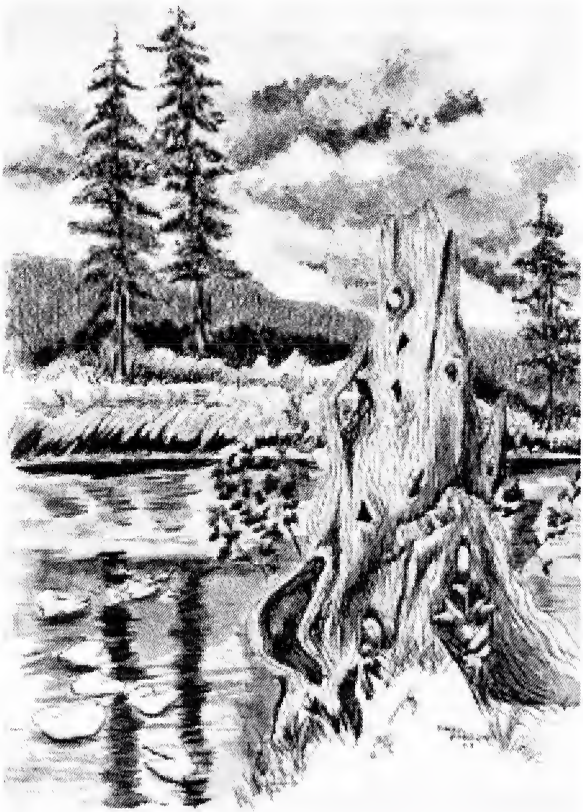
Our three towel-cloaked super-heroes scurried to the top of the Bozemans'house by way of the mimosa tree on the corner of the porch that contained our main stage. As always, Tom was upposed to jump first because he was the most fearless, the youngest and mostly the "crash test dummy" for the three.

In the nick of time, our heroes reached their cue spots as John Allen and Ken started roughing, robbing, pillaging or whatever those bad guys were doing to our helpless young ladies. Then to the rescue, Marty started the count, "One, two . . ." What a surprise to see Jonathan hit the ground with a big flat thump. He was successful in scaring off the bad guys who ran from the falling sky. Tom and Marty sheepishly peered over the edge of the roof a little dumbfounded with what Jon had done.

That was the longest silence ever heard in our neighborhood. We kids weren't sure if he was even alive until his Mom jumped out of her chair and ran screaming to his side. We then saw Jon breathe, and we all did, too.

Apparently, Jon had gotten the hankering to be the real star of the show for once and took an un-thought out leap before Tom's cue on three was called.

All Tom could say was, "For once, I am sure glad Jonathan went first 'cause he sure didn't fly very good."



Illustrator: Kathy Phillips

The Last Straw

John-Paul Bourn
3rd Place Short Story
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

There wasn't much to the small town of White Plains, Kansas in 1953. The population was only about eight hundred people with not much to offer in the community. In the center of town were the county courthouse and the sheriff's office. On the west part of town were the Feed 'n Seed and The Diner, which was very popular for its freshly baked apple pies. This was probably the most exciting thing about living in White Plains. The other side of town, opposite of the diner, offered onlyWilson's Market, owned by Jesse Wilson. On down the road from the market was the town's liquor store, which was on the county line.

Just outside of town lived Jeb and Willeen Kramer, who owned a turkey farm. Jeb, forty-seven years old, and Willeen, thirty-nine years old, kept pretty much to themselves, only going to town about two or three times a month to get turkey feed, supplies, and groceries. They had no kids, and the only time someone would come to their house is when, on a rare occasion, someone from the diner would deliver some apple pies.

It was the coldest day of the winter, and just like any other day, Jeb was shoveling the turkey dung out of the pen, while Willeen was working on putting up a new pen for a mess of pigs. Day was about to break, and everyday before supper Jeb would go out to the barn to play with his best friend Simon. Simon was a pig that Jeb acquired eight years ago when they first thought of raising pigs.

"Jeb! Jeb! Quit foolin' around with that stupid sow and grab a gobbler outta the pen. I feel like turkey tonight," Willeen shouted.

"You feel like turkey every night," Jeb replied.

Willeen Kramer was a manly-built woman who always wore muddy boots and dirty, old blue jeans with a blue jean jacket. She always had a snarl look on her face, and when she spoke only her

canine teeth showed. Her face was hideous, and her hair was colored like the dirt on the bottom of her feet. Her hair was torn and tangled as if she cut it herself with a butcher's knife; not to mention, she was severely mean to everyone around her.

Jeb, on the other hand, was a wild-eyed, malnourished looking man with greasy black and gray hair that matched his gapped-up beard. He always wore the same fishnet cap slightly tilted to the right and a faded, torn, oversized, plaid jacket. Unlike his wife, Jeb was a kind-hearted man who never caused any trouble.

Jeb and Willeen were eating dinner, as they always did, with their faces locked on their plates. "Don't forget that tomorrow we've gotta go into town," Willeen said, "So don't go back out to the barn after supper to wallow with that stinkin' pig."

"He's my friend, and he's nice to me," Jeb said defensively.

"Well, you better soak it up because that's the only place you're gonna get that kind of treatment," Willeen said.

The Kramers rolled into town around seven in the morning in their beat-up, black Ford truck that looked to be the junkiest truck in the whole county.

"Let's go to the diner before we get the supplies from the Feed 'n Seed," Willeen suggested. Willeen always wanted to go into the diner, primarily to make sport of the young, retarded waitress, Annie Dixon, who had been working there only a couple of years.

Annie Dixon was a young woman who was slightly retarded from when her father sexually abused her. After she had stabbed her father to death at age eleven, she spent ten years in a crazy house in Fortworth, Kansas. Annie was very quiet and looked meek and homely. She always wore a long, brown car-coat, which covered her figure. Her bright, red hair never came down from the bundle in the back of her head.

Willeen and Jeb entered the diner and sat down on the stools at the bar. Annie had her back to the bar while she sliced apples to make pie.

Willeen swiftly threw a salt shaker and hit Annie in the back, yelling, "How 'bout some service here."

Annie quickly turned around with the knife shaking in her hand, and hysterically screeched, "You leave me alone!"

Margarette Fuller, the daily manager, came over to Annie, softly grabbed her hand, and calmly whispered, "Annie, put the knife down. It's O.K."

Margarette walked over to Willeen and Jeb and with a nice, sarcastic sound to her voice asked, "What can I get ya'll ,Willeen?" Looking in Annie's direction, Willeen insultingly replied, "How 'bout Annie's head on a plate."

Annie ran out of the diner holding her hand over her weeping face.

Exiting the diner with full bellies, Willeen and Jeb went across the street to the Feed 'n Seed. Willeen forcefully said, "Jeb, you go get the turkey seed, and I'll go get the supplies for the pig pen. And hurry up!"

When Jeb got back to the truck, Willeen was already waiting on him. "Let's go, Jeb. I gotta get back and start supper," Willeen shouted.

Struggling trying to load the feed in the truck, Jeb dropped a bag of feed and it burst. Willeen hopped out of the truck, grabbed a shovel out of the back, and hit Jeb in the shoulder while screaming, "You couldn't carry your head if it weren't attached to your shoulders! Get in the truck!"

Arriving back home at three in the evening, Willeen and Jeb started unloading the truck.

"Where's my tacks?" Willeen shouted. "Jeb, go back to town and pick up my tacks, and I'll start supper."

Jeb stayed gone a few more hours, then returned with the tacks. "Willeen, I'm back," Jeb said exhaustingly.

"I'm in the kitchen," she replied angrily. Jeb walked into the kitchen.

"What smells so good?""Jeb asked.

"Ham."

"Where did you get ham?" Jeb asked with hesitation.

"I cut it off that dumb sow out there," Willeen said with her face still stuffed, looking down at her plate.

Jeb ran out of the house screaming for his friend. He looked in the pen and saw only a hole in the hay where his pig would sleep. Jeb slowly returned to the house. He went back into the kitchen, where Willeen sat with a full gut.

"Why did you kill my pig?" Jeb cried.

"Quit your whinin'," Willeen meanly responded. "Let's go to bed!"

Jeb woke up early the next morning and sat in a daze while he drank his coffee in the living room. After finishing his cup, he went over to the phone and called the diner.

"Hello."

"Margarette?" Jeb asked.

"Yes," she replied.

"This is Jeb, could someone at the diner send over a couple of apple pies?" Jeb asked nicely.

"It's just me and Annie here, and I can't leave," she replied.

"Can't you send Annie? Willeen isn't in right now so there won't be any trouble," Jeb stated assuringly.

"O.K.," Margarette agreed. "I'll send her on over."

Annie appeared at the door and knocked. Jeb opened the door and said, "Come on in. If you would just set those pies in the kitchen, I'm gonna grab some money for ya."

Annie opened the door to the kitchen, dropped the pies, and screamed, "Jeb! Something's happened to Willeen."

Willeen lay there on the kitchen floor with eight stab wounds and the blade still in her chest. Annie kneeled over Willeen in shock.

Looking into Willeen's lifeless eyes, Annie screamed violently, "Jeb, come here, Willeen's de..."

The last thing Annie heard was a blast and there stood Jeb in the kitchen door with his 30/30 Winchester rifle still smoking in his hands.

Jeb again walked over to the phone, this time to call the sheriff's office.

"Hello."

"Sheriff Bufford, it's Jeb."

"What can I do for ya, Jeb?" sheriff Bufford asked.

"I just walked in on Annie Dixon stabbing my wife to death, so I ran to grab my gun and shot her," Jeb frantically cried.

"I'll be right over." The sheriff quickly replied.

Sheriff Bufford arrived and quickly ran into the house.

"Jeb!" the sheriff yelled.

"In here," Jeb replied desperately.

Sheriff Buford entered the kitchen and with an unbelieving look in his eyes said, "Oh, God! What happened Jeb?"

Acting hysterical and paralyzed, Jeb explained to the sheriff that Annie had come over to deliver some pies. When Willeen saw her in the house, she started shoving and shouting at her. Annie ran over to the counter, grabbed a knife, and started stabbing Willeen. In the act, Jeb went in the other room to get his rifle and returned to the kitchen to see Annie kneeling over Willeen still stabbing her. Jeb then raised his rifle and shot Annie in the head. Jeb went on telling the sheriff, in detail, everything. Sheriff Bufford believed him and told him that he wasn't in any trouble.

Sheriff Bufford and Jeb walked outside.

"There's an ambulance coming. They'll clean up in there. If you want you can stay somewhere else tonight," the sheriff explained.

"I'll be alright," Jeb replied.

"I'll call ya if I need to know anything else," the sheriff stated.

Walking back to his car, the sheriff turned around and said with sorrow in his voice, "By the way, Jeb, I found your pig about a mile up the road."

Sheriff Bufford opened his back door and out came Simon, who ran anxiously to his owner. Jeb kneeled down on the porch to embrace his friend. Weeping both tears of joy and tears of sorrow onto his front steps, Jeb tightly held his companion.

The Price of Fame

Miranda Wilkinson
1st Place Short Story
Wesson High School

"...And I would like to thank God for letting me be here to accept this award," Jerra March concluded her acceptance speech. She faked one more wide grin before the tuxedo-clad stage hand led her to the back.

"Miss March, your limo is through side-door four. Mr. Thomas is waiting in it for you," another stagehand informed her in a hurry.

Jerra nodded her head and walked to the appropriate door. She turned just as she put her hand on the knob and looked back at the commotion she was stepping out of. Ever since she had accepted Ben Thomas's proposal of marriage, Jerra was never allowed to hang around and have fun with the people cutting up backstage. Ben hadn't even wanted her to be here tonight, but rumor leaked that she had positively won the award. Jerra had put up a big fight, and Ben had finally given in. Jerra turned the knob and walked out of the door. Sure enough, her limo was there.

"Well, it is about time. How far behind are they tonight? What took so long? Your speech wasn't that long, and my name wasn't mentioned. What is going on?" Ben Thomas finally finished.

"Oh, calm down, honey. It's a whirlwind backstage, and I had to fight to get through the crowd. What is wrong with you tonight?" Jerra countered.

"You still didn't answer my question. Why wasn't my name mentioned?"

"I forgot. You didn't sit beside me. You waited three hours in the limo. I haven't seen your face since I saw daylight; just calm down."

"Well, that really hurt, Jerra. We are supposed to be getting married in two months, and you couldn't even remember me. I can see the headlines now 'Jerra March thanks everyone but

fiancé: Trouble is in the future,'" Ben added to the newest of his arguments.

"I am not fighting with you tonight. My last boyfriend was physically abusive. You might not use fists, but your words have that much of an impact. My career paid for this ride. I sing my lungs out in front of hundreds of thousands and make the money. You sit in the limo and gripe because I might enjoy receiving an award for all my effort. Just shut up or get out!" Jerra was screaming now.

"I am so sorry, baby. Those little things you do just get to me sometimes. I can't handle all of those men staring at you. The jealous streak I inherited from my father just surfaces."

"It's like this every time, Ben. I am tired of the apologies. Don't talk to me right now. I'm not sure I even want to marry you anymore. If someone is not one hundred percent sure they want to spend the rest of their life with one person, then something is wrong. I will call you when I am ready to talk," Jerra scooted across the seat. She signaled the driver to stop. When he opened the door, Jerra handed Ben a twenty dollar bill. "Get a cab; ride to your own apartment. Don't come to my house."

Ben's face showed pure shock, then burning anger. He snatched the bill and climbed out of the opened door. Just as the driver was about to pull away, Jerra opened the sunroof and stuck her upper body out.

"Here's your cubic zirconium engagement ring back!" she yelled as she chucked it at him.

Ben snatched the ring from where it lay on the ground. Jerra sank back down in the limo and started to cry. For six months she had put up with Ben's problems. She had just accepted her first Grammy and was not about to let him ruin the night. It had been too long since she had enjoyed a night of fun. She wiped off the tears making their way down her cheeks. Letting down the dividing glass between herself and the driver, Jerra informed him her plans had changed. She was going to the after-award party at one of her fellow performers' Beverly Hills home.

When they arrived, she mingled with the crowd. People called congratulations from all directions. All she could do was smile and wave.

"Jerra! You made it. Honey, I am so glad. Where is that lost

puppy that usually follows you around?" the host good-naturedly joked.

All Jerra could do was hold up her left hand and show the empty finger. When her eyes met Darla's, Jerra just broke down.

"Well, it is about time. That jerk was not your type. There're so many good-looking guys here. He'll be out of your mind in no time. Come on inside and follow me to the powder room. You have mascara making a trail down your face. I don't even want to hear what went wrong. You just won one of the biggest awards of all time, and Ben Thomas is not going to ruin this for you," Darla Kerrington got out in one breath.

"Okay," Jerra finally mumbled. She turned and followed Darla inside. People were everywhere, but Darla managed to avoid the mainstream and slip her into a private bathroom.

"Now, let me help get this make-up off your cheeks. I've been there before, and let me tell you. No man is worth this. Calm yourself down this instant," Darla said in her soothing voice.

After a small pep talk in the bathroom, Jerra followed Darla back into the stream of people. Darla pulled her around for a little while showing her who was hanging out where.

"That is where most of the single ones your age are," Darla said with a small push of Jerra in that direction.

Immediately, the guys found their way to Jerra's side. Question after question filled the air, from why wasn't her fiancé in her acceptance speech to where was he tonight. Jerra finally told them the truth. After talking a little, the guys strayed off one by one. Finally, it was just Jerra and Andrew Buckley. They talked for what seemed like an eternity. Darla made her way to them through the dwindling number of people.

"Jerra, honey, it's almost four. I am about ready to shut this party down. Andrew, please escort her to her limo. I have her phone number, so just call me later," Darla added with a wink.

"Darla, thanks for the wonderful evening. This party was great. I don't know what I would do without you around," Jerra said, giving her a hug good bye.

"Yeah, Darla, great party. I'll call you tomorrow," Andrew added. They all laughed at that one.

"Andrew," Jerra said, looping her arm through his.

Jerra and Andrew made their way to her limo. They hugged good night and promised to stay in touch. Just as they were giving a final hug, a camera flash went off several times behind them. Andrew jerked Jerra behind him and turned with an angry start. The photographer ducked into the small area of trees and was out of sight in no time.

Jerra groaned, and Andrew cursed under his breath.

"The price of being famous..." Jerra trailed off.

"No privacy whatsoever. Darla will be so upset when she finds that picture in the paper and realizes it was taken in her driveway," Andrew muttered.

"Thanks for listening to me whine, but now is a safe time to go. I'll see you later," Jerra said as she shut the limo door.

The next morning Jerra's telephone started ringing at seven. Jerra woke with a start and turned the ringer off. Having only two and a half hours sleep would not cut it for her. When she eventually awoke, Jerra turned back on the ringer. She climbed out of bed and found the morning paper. To her horror on the front page of the gossip section, she read "New Pop Princess in Another Man's Arms after Failing to Mention Fiancé in Speech." Two of the pictures the photographer snapped were under the headline.

"Oh, no," she groaned. "The price of being famous..."

Illustrator: Amanda Folse

The Game

Ryan Williams
2nd Place Short Story
Wesson High School

It was a Friday night; the lights shown brightly on the field as the boys began to dress in their uniforms. This game was very important: they were playing the Yankees, a team that they had never beaten before. As they ran out on the field in their Mets uniforms, the crowd screamed with anticipation. Josh began to warm up; he was the starting pitcher, and everyone was so excited to see him back on the field. Just a few weeks ago Josh was having trouble with his shoulder, and the doctors told him that he was not to play until his results came back from the lab.

Josh's mom sat in the stands with a worried look on her face. She knew that Josh shouldn't be out there in his condition, but Josh insisted that he play. His mom knew what the results had said and wasn't exactly sure that Josh should be playing baseball. When the results had come back, they showed that he had cancer in his shoulder. Josh didn't want to tell anyone just yet, especially the guys on the team. He didn't want to let them down.

The first pitch was thrown. "Strike!" yelled the umpire. The crowd cheered as Josh threw another strike, then another. Finally, it was the last inning of the game, and the game was tied up. The other team was up to bat with two outs. Josh started to feel weak, but he just figured he was tired from playing the whole game. He threw another ball, and a line drive was hit straight at him. As the ball traveled at a fast speed toward Josh, he fell to the ground. The outfield got the ball and threw it in, but Josh never got up. He just lay there with no movement. His coach and the boys ran to him to see what was wrong. Josh was unconscious. His mom ran onto the field and knelt down beside him, yelling for someone to call the paramedics. His mom looked at him; his face was pale with no emotion showing. When the paramedics arrived, they rushed onto the field to Josh. The checked his pulse; there was no pulse. They loaded him into the ambulance and rushed him to the hospital. When they got there,

they discovered that the cancer had begun to spread and was now in his blood stream.

Josh's mom waited patiently in the waiting room for a report on Josh. She sat what seemed like hours and began to grow worried. It had been hours since she had heard from the doctors. Finally, the doctor arrived and told her that they were doing as much as they could, but he probably wouldn't make it through the night. They led her back to his room to tell him good- bye. She pulled up a chair by his bed and began to talk to herself, reminding herself of Josh's younger years and how he was so energetic as a child. She just couldn't believe that this was her son lying in this hospital bed, so frail and limp.

She told herself that this was all just a dream, which she would wake up from later. Suddenly, a loud beep came from one of the machines hooked to Josh's body. Nurses and doctors rushed in, and one of the nurses made her leave the room. She began to scream for them to let her be with her son. They would not let her go. She tried to make them let go, but they wouldn't. She began to pray, "God, please don't take my son." She felt very alone, so far from her son. The doctor told her that there was nothing she could do.

Josh died shortly after. After the funeral his mom was going through all of his baseball stuff and found a letter addressed to her from Josh:

Mom,

I couldn't ask for more. I was raised right, and I got to play baseball one last time. I want you to know that I am not scared to die. I have lived a good life, and you have been a great mother. I got to accomplish so many things, things most people would die to accomplish, but I died accomplishing them. There is nothing more I want than to be what you have made me. Please don't cry for me, I am at rest now, and I will be watching over you like you watched over me when I was a child. Wherever you go, I will be with you. I will be by your side, and whenever you feel you need to talk to me, I will be listening. I love you so much, mom.

Love,

Josh

Tears ran from her eyes as she read the letter. She realized she never got to say good-bye to her son. She remembered what he wrote about his listening to her when she wanted to talk to him. She stared up in the sky and began to talk to Josh as if he were still there. She asked him if he would just give her a sign to let her know he was okay. She looked high in the sky and there it was, a rainbow, on a perfect day, a rainbow, no rain, no clouds, but there was a rainbow. She closed her eyes and smiled, and for some reason she felt a peace fall on her. She knew Josh was okay and that she had to move on.

Illustrator: Kathy Phillips

One Second

Michelle McCrary
3rd Place Short Story
Wesson High School

The sun was shining brightly through the curtains in Sarah's room, hitting her in the face. She awoke squinting, angered that she had forgotten to close the curtains the night before, and she had thus been awakened from her usual Saturday morning slumber. She soon realized that the sun was not what had caused her to awaken. Some horrible racket was coming from outside the window, a mixture of a car horn and yelling. Sarah crawled out of bed and shuffled her way towards the window. Peering through the window, she caught sight of something that took her breath away. The cause of all the commotion was her father, lying on the horn of a brand new, silver sports car. Sarah was immediately jarred from her sleepiness and sprinted outside, enveloping her father in a hug and admiring her new ride.

Later on, she called her best friend Tessa, ecstatic with her news.

"Tess!" she cried into the receiver, "You'll never guess what I got this morning!"

"Hmmm..." replied Tessa, "Could it be a new silver sports car with black interior and an all-too-cool stereo system?"

"How'd you know?" asked Sarah.

"Awww Sarah, your parents told me weeks ago."

"Man, I can't believe you kept it from me for so long, but who cares? Hurry up and get over here so we can go for a ride!"

Weeks later, she entered her homeroom class and could feel the eyes upon her. She didn't look up, nor did she speak. She made her way to her seat and tried to ignore the roar of whispers around her. Throughout the day, she could sense when other students intended to speak to her, and rather than face them, she would turn and go the other way. Emotionally, she was stable until fifth period. That period was the class they had shared. She walked slowly to her seat and did her best to not look at the desk beside her. However, her attempts failed, and she was drawn to

the chair's emptiness. The vacant desk tore at Sarah's heart, and through her tears she relived the worst day of her life.

Tessa came over minutes after she got off the phone with Sarah. They got into the car, smiling so hard their cheeks hurt, and they drove off with no destination in mind. They rode for hours. The windows were down, radio was blaring, and the girls' favorite song was playing. Both were singing at the top of their lungs, laughing, smiling, and enjoying their youth. Sarah took her eyes off the road for only one second, but that was all it took. The crunch of metal, the breaking of glass, and the sound of her best friend screaming were the last things Sarah could remember.

Sarah awoke in the hospital, sore and surrounded by machines monitoring her every move. Her father, looking years older, held her hand as the doctor broke the news. Tessa had not lived through the crash.

Sarah and Tessa had been best friends ever since the second grade. They had seen each other through good and bad, played every sport together, and loved one another with the kind of love only true friends share. All of that disappeared in a second. Just one second.

Illustrator: Amanda Folse

Snooker

Earl Bell
Honorable Mention Short Story
Wesson High School

"Hurry up and shoot, Earl!"

"Okay, dang it!" I yelled back.

"All right, Earl," I muttered to myself. ""ust cut the seven ball sharply into the side and you'll be okay."

"Here goes nothing," I told myself.

Crack! I watched with anxiety as I saw the cue ball roll towards the seven ball. I really wanted this shot because I didn't want to lose, but mostly because if I missed this shot, I'd have to pay for the game. To tell the truth, I didn't even have any money with me. I watched intently as the cue ball struck the seven at the sharp angle I was hoping for. A sigh of relief escaped my mouth as the seven sunk down into the side pocket.

"BOOOYAAAAHHHH!" I yelled out.

Then, just when I was about to break out my victory dance, I watched with unbelief as the cue ball fell into the corner pocket. I lost the game. Everyone around me burst out with laughter.

"Oh well," I said.

I went up to my friend who had been watching the game to ask if I could borrow a dollar.

"Hey big man, let me hold a dollar!"

He slowly raised his head up. He looked into my eyes and just laughed at me.

"How many times have you had to pay tonight?" he laughed.

"Three," I said with a defeated voice.

"All this smoke in here is affecting me," I said, trying to save my pride.

"Whatever," he said. "Here, but you owe me."

He handed me the dollar while still laughing at my seemingly hilarious defeat. I went up to the cash register and paid for the game, and then I headed back to the pool table.

"I think I'm through for the night," I said as I sat down.

"Good," my friend said. "You were about to start writing I.O.U.'s."

My friend got up and grabbed my pool stick.

"It's my turn; don't worry," he said. "I'll get them."

He stepped up to the table. *Crack!* He hit the cue ball and knocked in four balls on the break.

"That'll never happen again,""my friend laughed to himself.

I said, "You're right; even a blind squirrel finds a nut every once in a while!"

What I witnessed next was the sorriest excuse for a snooker game I've ever seen. My friend didn't just miss the shots; he even missed the balls themselves. It was utterly pathetic. It was hilarious. By the end of the game, I was ashamed to be friends with him. As we were walking out of the pool hall, all was silent between us. That is, except for me laughing at him.

"I guess that blind squirrel didn't know where he was going and ran out in the road and got run over," I laughed.

He looked at me and said, "Earl, you're gay."

I just laughed at him. We got in our separate vehicles and went home. Just to do it all again tomorrow.

True Love

Tommy Crockett
2nd Honorable Mention Short Story
Wesson High School

It was a bright summer day. The birds were chirping, and everything seemed normal. A couple of friends and I were out fishing behind my house. Josh and Cayla were on the other side of the pond and left me, Tommy, alone. It didn't bother me much because I knew that Josh had a little crush on Cayla. I heard Josh tell Cayla he needed to talk to her, and they walked into the woods leaving the line in the water, not to mention me. I was fishing by myself until I saw Cayla come back bloody and out of breath.

I yelled across the pond, "What happened?"

She had no response. Then Josh walked out of the woods as if nothing was wrong. I asked Josh, "What took so long?" I wanted to know because they left me out there for about three hours.

He calmly said, "We weren't that long."

I looked at him and said "Look at the sun—it's almost set; you've been gone a good three hours, if not longer."

Josh responded, "I swear it was only ten minutes." I didn't want to argue with him because there was no winning. I was tired of fishing, and it was getting dark so we left and went back to my house.

We all spent the night at my house. My mom didn't care because we're best friends. We had been friends for almost ten years now, and it all started when we were seven. Josh has always liked Cayla, and I guess I liked her a little myself. Well, when we were seven, I threw a rock and hit Cayla, and she started to cry. I was happy because I got her attention, but Josh wasn't as happy as me. He picked up a rock and put me in the hospital. The rock busted my head, so I had to get stitches. Well, we came to find out his mother and mine were really good friends, and his mom made him apologize. When I went to school the next day, my mom escorted me into the room and asked if Cayla could step

outside. I told Cayla "Maybe you should have moved instead of standing there like a moron." Mom didn't like that comment too much, so I got a quick slap on the back of the head for my apology. Cayla laughed and said "Apology accepted." Ever since that day it's been all down hill, until now.

Cayla and Josh both say that they were only in the woods for about ten minutes, but I knew I was fishing for three hours. I asked them if they remembered anything out of the ordinary. Josh replied, "Yeah, I remember the time you hit Cayla in the head with a rock." We all started laughing and got off the subject, but I wanted to know what took so long.

Finally, it was just Josh and I sitting outside after Cayla fell asleep on the couch. I asked him again, "Man, you don't remember anything unusual about today?" He looked at me like he never had before and said, "Dude, something major happened." He paused and looked at the sky filled with stars.

I quickly asked, "Well, what happened?"

He looked at me and said, "You won't believe me, and besides, everything seems so blurry."

He was so serious I couldn't tell him he was lying. I had to know what made my friend so worried so I asked him, "What happened? You know you can tell me anything."

He looked around as if something was watching him and finally said, "I asked Cayla to come into the woods so I could ask her to the prom. Well, we sat there and talked for about five minutes and then it happened."

He paused for a minute and I quickly jumped in with, "What, what happened?" He snapped and said, "Give me a minute. I said everything is blurry!" I was confused; I was wondering what could be so blurry.

He said, "Okay, I remember a small plate flying around us."

I asked, "You mean like a saucer?"

He said, "Oh yeah, that's it. It wasn't very big at all, but it moved faster than anything I have ever seen. It had real pretty lights on it, too. Then I saw a light hit Cayla and she disappeared."

"Disappeared?" I asked.

He answered, "Yes, like into thin air. She was gone. Then

the light hit me, and this is where it gets blurry."

I looked at him and could tell he was getting sleepy, and that whatever happened had really upset him. So I reluctantly said, "How about we finish this story tomorrow?"

He yawned as he nodded his head in agreement.

The next morning Cayla was the first to wake up. She came and woke me up. I said, "Hey sunshine, leave me alone!"

She looked at me and said, "Ha ha, funny man, get up we've got to talk."

I got out of bed and put on my house shoes and an old shirt and met her outside on the back porch. When I went outside, Cayla was pacing back and forth and biting her nails. I asked, "Why am I up this early? It's only ten o'clock."

She looked confused as she asked, "What happened yesterday?" I replied, "I wish I knew."

Then she asked, "Did something bad happen, and why did I have blood on my shirt?"

Again I had to answer, "I wish I knew." So I had to ask her the question, "Do you remember anything?"

She looked at me and said "I remember walking in the woods with Josh. That's all I remember, though." I couldn't do anything to ease her, because I didn't know what happened; only Josh knew, and he hadn't told me the complete story yet.

Since we live in the South, there aren't too many options to do something to occupy our time. We had a choice between riding four wheelers, fishing, or going into town to play pool. Josh pulled me to the side and said, "I'm going 'fishing.' You and Cayla ride around in the creek on the four wheeler."

I didn't ask any questions so Cayla and I went riding around the creek for a couple of hours and took a rest on a sand bar. It was hot so we jumped in the spring-fed creek and talked about school and the opposite sex. We talked for a solid hour and realized it was time to go home.

When we got back Josh said his mom had called, and he was going to drop Cayla off at her house. I asked Josh before he left if he caught any fish. He looked at me with the same look that he had the night before and said, "I'll call you." I hugged my friends good-bye and told them to be safe as they were leaving.

I knew it took Josh less than thirty minutes to get home, even if he did have to drop off Cayla. I was sitting by the phone waiting for it to ring. An hour passed by with no word from Cayla or Josh. I got worried and called Cayla to see if she made it home safely. Cayla picked up the phone and explained that Josh was looking weird when he dropped her off. I got really worried for my friend so I said, "Well, let me call him to see what's up." I called him and no one picked up the phone. This is really strange because he is usually home, and Cayla said he dropped her off about forty-five minutes ago. I got worried, walked outside, and saw Josh's truck in my driveway; it was empty. That's strange; he didn't tell me he was coming back and I didn't hear him pull up. I followed his footprints to the pond, and after the pond they led off into the woods. I followed his footprints until there weren't any more. It was like he just vanished. I walked back home and saw that his truck was gone.

As soon as I got in the door, the phone started ringing. My mom answered and yelled, "Tommy, it's for you!" I rushed to the phone, "OK, Mom, I got it!" Finally, Josh called me after all of the confusion. I got on the phone chewing him out with "Where have you been? Do you know what time it is?" It was just question after question.

He stopped me and said, "I know what happened." This was it; the moment seemed like it never was going to come, and it was finally here.

I had a mix of emotions when I asked, "Well, um, what happened?" He took a deep breath and started, "Well, the flying saucer thing was just something I had to tell you until I went back and really found out what happened. I went back into the woods where it all happened." I knew exactly where he meant. He continued, "The part about Cayla vanishing, that wasn't a lie though. She did vanish, and somehow we got sucked into another dimension. I was scared to death, man; I'm not going to lie. Cayla and I were in the time when the colonists were fighting the Indians for land. I thought I was in a movie. It was a bunch of fighting. No one could see me, not even Cayla. I saw Cayla get stabbed, and I yelled out for help. But I had to sit there, and she began to look at me. When we came back, she had blood on her stomach where I saw her get stabbed in the other dimension."

He paused for about five seconds and I chimed in with,

"What else?"

He started back, "Well, I went back there today, you know, without Cayla. The same thing happened, but this time Cayla told me how she..." he stopped.

I quickly asked, "What's the hold up?"

He said, "Her name wasn't Cayla. She said her name was Elizabeth."

I said, "Ok, now back to the story."

He started back, "Well, Elizabeth said to tell all her loved ones she misses them."

Then he told me why he came back tonight. "You know how I took Cayla home today right?" he asked.

I answered, "Yeah, it wasn't that long ago."

He said, "Well, I asked her what her name was. She told me it was 'Cayla Elizabeth Ethridge.'" That is when I was stunned. I had to tell her what Elizabeth told me to tell her. So I did. I said 'Cayla, I love you,' but before I could finish why I had to tell her, she told me she loved me back. I told her that I really did love her, and I told her why. We sat in my truck and talked and I told her why she had blood on her and why I told her I loved her. But I had to get back to the place behind the pond. When I got there in the exact same place I saw today where there was only a bunch of leaves. I saw a huge rose that bloomed out from nowhere. I picked up the rose and I went forward in time, and guess what I saw. It was Cayla and I getting married. But the weirdest part was that Cayla looked just like Elizabeth."

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening": A Thematic Analysis

Roland A. Smith
1st Place Literary Essay
Copiah-Lincoln Community College

In his poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," Robert Frost describes a man who stops to marvel at the beauty of a forest filling up with snow. The poem begins with a traveler trotting down a rural path on horseback. Suddenly, he is struck motionless by the lovely woods owned by a man who lives in a village not far away. For a short while he sits and admires the enticing pull of the dark and snowy woods. His horse then jerks him back into reality with an inquisitive shake. The man remembers that he still has things to do, so he reluctantly continues on down the path. Frost's poem paints a theme that describes an important aspect of the human condition. No matter how much we desire eternal rest, we must first handle the responsibilities in our lives. The diction, sound, imagery, and setting of this poem point to that theme.

The diction used by Frost is one clue to the poem's theme. For instance, in the last stanza he writes, "But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep..." Here, two words are particularly well chosen. They are "promises" and "sleep." The word "promises" hints at certain responsibilities or tasks that this man has not yet completed. "Sleep" obviously refers to some form of rest. Other elements of this poem suggest that this type of rest is death. When these two ideas are combined, it is easy to see that this man longs for the comfort of death, but his journey is not quite over yet.

Frost uses alliteration—the repetition of initial consonant sounds—to reinforce his theme. For example, Frost writes, "The only other sounds the sweep..." The repeated "s" sound has an alluring quality somewhat similar to the mesmerizing hiss of a snake. This sound suggests the seductive comfort of death.

Frost uses imagery to illustrate his theme. In the second stanza Frost writes, "Between the woods and frozen lake," and in the fourth stanza he writes, "The woods are lovely, dark and deep." The lake is described as cold and motionless. The woods are described as attractive, but at the same time mysterious and ominous. These two lines paint the depressing picture of a man who is surrounded by nothing but gloom. Such is the mood poets try to project when they are discussing death.

Finally, Frost's setting supports his theme. The poem takes place in the countryside. As I quoted earlier, the man is somewhere between the snowy woods and a frozen lake. Frost also writes, "My little horse must think it queer To stop without a farmhouse near," which means that there is no one living in the area. This solitude portrays death as a journey that every man must make alone. Frost also uses the poem's temporal setting to represent the dark uncertainty of death. He writes, "The darkest evening of the year." This is certainly a reference to December 21, which is the shortest day and longest night of the year. A man who can admire snowy woods in the middle of nowhere during the dead of winter must have some inner yearning for the peaceful rest of death.

By effectively using literary tools, Frost presents a theme that almost anyone can relate to on some level. Some people need a vacation, but they can not afford it. Others long for retirement, but their kids still need some type of financial support. And still some, like the man in this poem, are ready to embrace death, but they still have bonds here on earth that force them to continue living. The theme of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," is thus universal and timeless.

Paradise Lost

Josh Berch
1st Place Literary Essay
Wesson High School

In John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the most evil being known to man is displayed as a character with strong qualities. Satan has rebelled against God and caused man to commit the first sin. Regardless of his evil, throughout the poem, Satan is shown to have positive attributes that cause the reader to admire him. Satan is shown in a positive light, having admirable qualities such as ambition and courage. However, after establishing these qualities to Satan, Milton points out that they are in vain.

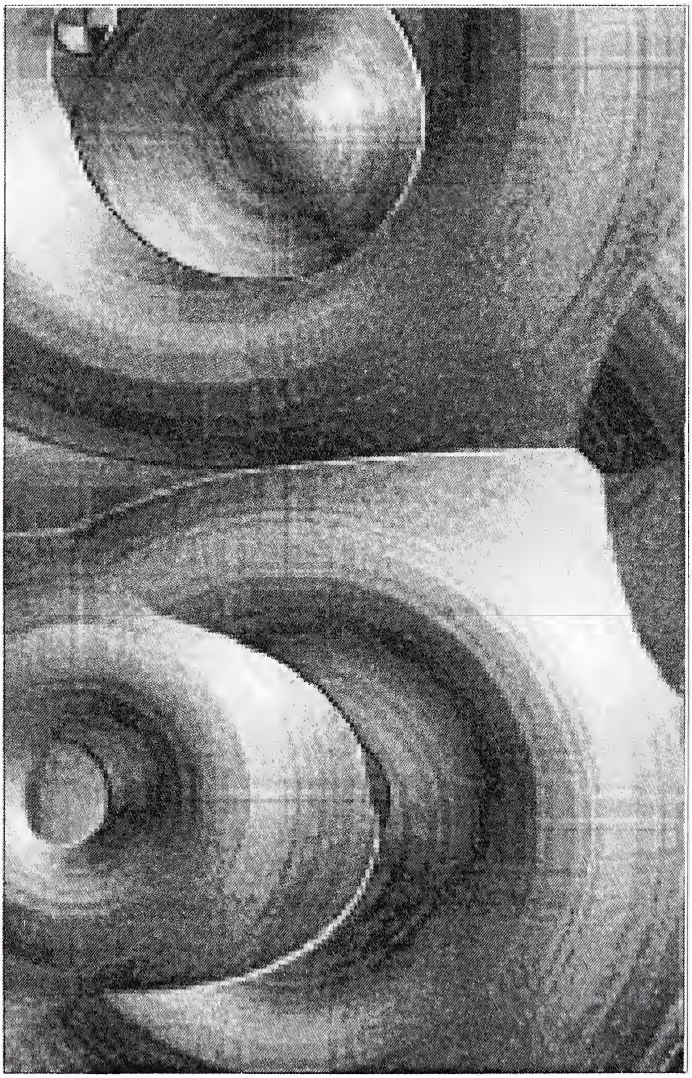
Satan shows ambition when he continues to be determined to bring evil to the world, even though all of his attempts fail. "While he sought evil to others; enraged might see how all his malice served but bring forth infinite goodness, grace, and mercy shown" (Milton, John. *Paradise Lost.* 215-219). He is aware of his own ambitions and finds pride in them. He says, "To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell: Better to reign in hell than to serve in Heaven" (265-263).

Satan displays a large amount of courage when facing the situation he is in. Although he has been sent to a place, out of punishment, in which no other being could find hope or pride, he finds hope. He says, "What reinforcement we may gain from hope, if not, what resolution from despair" (190-191). Satan values his courage and vows to never sacrifice it, regardless of the consequences. "And courage never to submit or yield" (108).

After establishing Satan's admirable qualities, Milton then states that all of these good qualities are in vain. No matter how many admirable qualities Satan has, he is still destined to fail. He had "raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud with vain attempt" (43-44). It did not matter how determined or courageous Satan was, he had no chance when facing such an ultimate power.

Milton characterizes Satan in a positive and strong light in order to establish the ultimate supremacy of God over all crea-

tures. Had Satan been displayed as a weak and timid opponent, God's victory over him would have been meaningless. In order for God to be established as the highest power, he has to defeat the next highest.



Illustrator: Justin Warren

Evil Nature of Mankind

Lyndsay Caston
2nd Place Literary Essay
Wesson High School

In William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*, a group of boys are used to represent a metaphorical idea in which they are borne onto an island and manifest mankind's true nature. One could argue that man, in the state of nature, is born evil. As the story unfolds, the boys destroy the island and ruin it. Toward the end of the story, all of the boys with good intentions are killed, except for Ralph. Golding uses these ideas in the situation involving the young boys to prove that man is evil.

The only permanent evil is the evil that man loves and wants to continue in. Jack is a perfect example of this situation. The lack of boundaries of civilization causes Jack to become a savage, power-hungry killer. It is plain to see that the boys do not need to hunt to survive; however, Jack finds much pleasure in doing this. When he kills a pig, "he began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling" (Golding 58).

Nothing in the nature around them suggests evil; yet man is quick to blame the cruelty of nature for their acts. There is no doubt, though, that Roger is the worst of the group. He exists only to annihilate and destroy the life on the island. For example, he would always bully the "littluns" and throw things at them and destroy anything that they would suggest or do.

Though most of the boys are seduced by the dark-side, there are a few honest souls. Simon and Ralph are really the only two boys that do not give into the temptations of evil, such as hunting and killing innocent pigs, becoming part of the different mobs, and making things more chaotic than they already were. Yet, none of that matters to Simon because he was killed by his so-called friends. He showed compassion for all of the boys; for example, he gave Piggy his food when Jack refused to give him any, and he always helped to make sure that the fire stayed lit. When the " littluns" are hungry, "Simon found fruit they could not reach.... and passed them back down to the endless, outstretched hands" (51). Simon was an individual. He was far

different than the other boys; he was virtuous and kind, he could have been just as evil as the other boys, but he chose not to be.

Ralph is another one of the better boys on the island, even though he did take place in the killing of Simon; he only did it out of fear. "He treats day's decisions as though he were playing chess. The only trouble was that he would never be a very good chess player" (106). The fact that Ralph makes bad decisions does mark him as an evil character. Ralph too is born with evil qualities just as any other boy on the island, but he does not embrace it.

The boys as a group partake in just as many sinister activities as they do individually. Throughout the story, the boys form mobs. Most of them come together when something is about to be killed. They invoke the chant, "Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!" (138). As it is with all little boys, they are harder to control when together in a group. The death of Simon is an unfortunate side effect of the lack of control of the mob of boys.

Toward the end of the story, there is total anarchy. The island catches on fire, and Jack's hunters set out to find and kill Ralph. Roger had "a stick sharpened at both ends" (190). They were going to slay Ralph and place his decapitated head on the end of the stick. None of the children stood up to Jack. The children being scared of Jack made them just as much a coward as Jack was.

There is no explanation for evil. It is viewed as a part of life and order of the universe. Fighting and being evil is inherited, one only does is because he or she sees others involved in evil acts. One cannot stop evil. The boys on the island had no art, no letter, and no real society. They all lived in constant fear. When living in fear and faced with the choices of good and evil, they choose the side of darkness. In doing this they proves that man in evil.

The Metamorphosis

Ryan Baker
3rd Place Literary Essay
Wesson High School

In Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis,* the main character, Gregor Samsa, is transformed into an insect. The change is not only present in Gregor, but also in his family. After Gregor's transformation ,he is locked away in his room and almost forgotten. With Gregor's loneliness comes despair and shame towards his family. Gregor is looked upon as an outcast and resented by his family for something he could not control. These feelings eventually come to a sudden climax with Gregor's death. Throughout T*he Metamorphosis*, Kafka's description of Gregor's isolation from the family unit is directly linked to the isolation of an individual from society.

When the family is first introduced to the new form of Gregor Samsa, they are repulsed by the sight of him. Gregor meets the family and his manager at the door with a solid explanation of his tardiness to work. "But at Gregor's first words the manager had already turned away with curled lips, looked back at Gregor only over his twitching shoulder. And during Gregor's speech he did not stand still for a moment but, without letting Gregor out of his sight, backed towards the door" (Kafka, *The Metamorphosis* 16).

This quotation is the first example of Gregor's isolation. Gregor's form and inaudible speech frighten the manager away. The fear shown by the manager is common to human nature. Through his transformation, Gregor becomes a hideous figure and forces fear into the manager's reasoning. Human societies, just as the family and the manager did, reject any sort of difference and push away change.

The Samsa family misunderstood many things that Gregor did while he was in insect form. "'''Mother, Mother,' said Gregor softly and looked up at her. For a minute the manager had completely slipped his mind; on the other hand at the sight of the spilling coffee he could not resist snapping his jaws several times in the air" (18). Mrs. Samsa watches Gregor snap his jaws and

automatically thinks he is going to attack her. But, since Gregor is transformed into an insect, he has different reactions to situations.

The misinterpretation of this simple act swings the entire family against Gregor. Mr. Samsa swings his walking stick at Gregor and forces him back into his room, locking the door. "The door was slammed shut with the cane, then at last everything was quiet" (20). The door, being closed, stands as a final barrier between the family and Gregor. Quiet resumes in the house and all seems normal except for the wondering minds of the family. Gregor is shut out just as certain groups of people are pushed away from society because of their looks or agendas.

In Gregor's case, and within society, there are some sorts of sympathy. *The Metamorphosis* uses sympathy as Gregor's sister Grete. Grete is very kind in the beginning, but she eventually becomes fed up with her chores and resents Gregor's state and his lack of use. "But even if his sister, exhausted from her work at the store, had gotten fed up with taking care of Gregor as she used to" (44). Sympathy can only go for so long without being appreciated. Grete helps her brother as much as possible until she sees the total uselessness of her job. People sympathize when they see others that are in need of help, yet humans become disgusted when those they help do not show signs of improvement or thanks.

The family also sees Gregor as a nuisance. "It was the commandment of family duty to swallow their disgust and endure him, endure him and nothing more" (40). The family had lost all real care for Gregor. He is no longer seen as a part of the family, only as a bug that must be kept. Gregor sees that his family, who once prized him for his financial accomplishments, is neglecting him. The family only keeps Gregor for what he once was, not what he is now. Individuals are held high for their past accomplishments in society. Heroes are called heroes only when they accomplish great feats, not when they grow old and tired.

Gregor's death brings about a new existence for the family. The sacrifice of Gregor allowed the family members to develop into their own individuals and not just one solid unit. "And it was like a conformation of their new dreams and good intentions" (58). Throughout the story the family has blossomed. The sacrifice of one individual leads to the enlightenment of three

others. Society makes its sacrifices as well. People and entire societies are put to the test and brought down so others can learn from their mistakes and accomplish their own goals.

Gregor Samsa's connection to society is one of large proportions. The people that make up a society all rely on one another, and societies rely on the structure of its people. His family neglects Gregor in the same way society casts out certain individuals for certain irregularities. The harsh reality of Gregor's situation is clear to him in the end of the story. He understands the burden that he places on his family and relieves them of his presence with his death. His existence is all too sad, because he works so hard for the people he loves, but when he needs favors in return, they turn their backs on him.

The Rape of the Lock

Jeff Sugg
Honorable Mention Literary Essay
Wesson High School

In Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock,* Pope uses satire to demean the way England was governing itself at the time. Pope elevates a card game to seem war-like. Pope compares an imported, lacquered table to a Japanese altar. Pope also raises a battle of words and stares to a life-and-death struggle. Throughout the poem, Pope uses satire to elevate the trivial to the grandeur, and exaggerate the morals of English society.

To begin with, Pope uses satire even in the title. He uses the word "rape" in place of cutting. Rape implies the end of something, innocence as an example. Whereas, cutting implies nothing more than, just as it says, cutting Belinda's hair. Secondly, when her hair is cut, Belinda "screams in horror" (Pope, *The Rape of the Lock* 156). Belinda should be upset, even mad, but fear should not cross her mind.

"Each band the number of the sacred nine" (30). Here Pope compares the nine cards in Belinda and the Baron's hands to the Greek Muses. "Spadillo first, unconquerable lord!" (49). Here Pope compares the Ace of Spades to a lord. In both examples Pope raises a simple card game to the heights of the Greeks and English lords. While, demeaning the Greeks and the English.

Later in the poem, after the card game, everyone in the room stops what he is doing and has some coffee. "Coffee (which makes the politicians wise)" (117). Here Pope credits English politicians' "wisdom" to coffee. Pope implies that English politicians' priorities are out of order. Pope further implies that while more important activities need attending, the necessities of English politicians' objectives are put off for coffee.

"By the victim's spade, Thus far both Armies to Belinda's yield" (65-65). Now, Pope adds the emphasis of war to his card game. By defeating the Baron's "army," Belinda has conquered the Baron;,much like an army General conquers someone else's land. Belinda takes over the Baron's will much like an army General would take over someone else's property, or financial

holdings.

Pope used satire to demean the mannerisms of the English politicians of his time. Pope compares the ways of England's high society to children who would rather play cards, drink coffee, and gossip rather go about the business they should. Pope relays his opinions on the society of his time in *The Rape of the Lock* by using satire.

Illustrator: Cinique Lenoir

Macbeth

Josh Edwards
2nd Honorable Mention Literary Essay
Wesson High School

Throughout *Macbeth,* the reader sees how Macbeth transforms from "my noble partner" (Shakespeare, 1.3.54) to a "hellhound" (5.8.3). In the beginning, Lady Macbeth was the stronger of the two, but she eventually becomes the weaker. In the end she is sorry and confused by how she caused such uproar. So the reader can see, the two characters exchange personalities. Macbeth is clueless to this horrifying change, while Lady Macbeth is sleepless and taunted by the evil she has done. From the taking of the throne to the loss of the throne, both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have many changes in their personalities.

At the start of the play, Lady Macbeth is clearly the stronger and more dominant partner of the marriage. She does not hesitate to act on the witches' prophecy, and she encourages her husband to murder the king. She taunts him to do the deed and covers for him when he starts to fall apart after the murder. She returns the knives to the scene and covers the guards with blood, so they will be suspected. From this point on, Macbeth becomes the stronger partner. He turns into a monster, killing numerous people, and Lady Macbeth realizes that she is responsible for this transformation. She has lost the hero and turned her husband into a tyrant. She is shocked by her husband's brutality. She is also unable to sleep and feels guilty for her actions. Her guilty conscience leads to her suicide.

In the beginning Macbeth has a conscience, but it causes him to go mad. Lady Macbeth says he is "to full o' the milk of human kindness" (1.5.12). Lady Macbeth is a cold-hearted hypocrite who tries to cover her wrong when she says "Come, you spirits that tend on moral thoughts, unsex me here, and fill me, from crown to top, full of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood" (1.5.35-38). Lady Macbeth is shown to be the stronger of the two. Later the two are swapped when Lady Macbeth becomes sick mentally. "She has spoke what she should not, I am sure of that.

Heaven knows what she has known" (5.1.33-34). She begins sleepwalking and talking in fits. Macbeth is shown as confident. Malcolm says he is a rotten fruit. Macduff states that he is a "tyrant" (5.8.27). He is torn by his wife's suicide, but he must continue to fight the battle. In the end Macduff defeats him because of his boastful ways.

Macbeth and Lady Macbeth were opposites throughout the play. Act One shows Macbeth with a strong conscience, ambitious, and a noble partner, while Lady Macbeth was the hypocrite, fearless, and ruthless. Later as the scenes change, Macbeth becomes ruthless, brave, and cold-hearted; unlike Lady Macbeth who loses her cool, goes insane, and constantly tries to rid herself of her blood stained hands. The reader is drawn into the play by Shakespeare's use of irony and great detail work. The constant battle between the two personalities makes the play action-packed. From the taking of the throne to the loss of the throne, both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth have many changes in their personalities.

Laws of Life

Jerilynn Beall
1st Place General Essay
Wesson High School

Everyone has specific laws or rules that he or she applies to everyday life. Everyone's laws are not the same, and they vary in many different ways. Certain people may not agree with my laws or rules, but that does not cause me to stop living by them. I am my own person and it is my choice as to which laws to live by. I believe the laws you choose should be the most important ones. The specific laws that apply to my life are love, trust, and prayer.

To me, love is life. Without love, a person doesn't actually live. Along with love comes happiness and joy. If I had a choice between having all the money in the world or having love in my life, I would definitely choose love. Money can't buy happiness. There are two types of love and I am fortunate enough to have both types in my life. There is the type of love that family members and friends share and also the type of love shared between two people who feel they belong together.

To actually have love that is true, a person must first establish trust. I don't believe I could ever love someone that I find untrustworthy. Trust is the basis of all relationships. I know, somehow, whom I can and can't trust. Unfortunately, I have learned the hard way who is untrustworthy. I am sure that everyone has experienced that at some point in time. In my opinion, if a relationship lacks trust, there is no meaning to the relationship.

I saved the best for last. I definitely apply prayer to my life. I have a good relationship with God and I pray about everything. It makes me feel good about myself and certain situations in my life. I have the assurance that God is there with me to help me

with certain obstacles that approach me. I also thank God everyday for unanswered prayers. He works in mysterious ways and gives something even greater than what I was praying for to begin with. God has given me the ability to see the importance of love, trust, and prayer. He also gives me the ability to apply them to my everyday life.

Illustrator: Phillip Smith

Hard Work

Russell Robinson
2nd Place General Essay
Wesson High School

People who are willing to work hard are becoming harder and harder to find. In today's society most people want to do enough just to get by. People in our great country have become lazy. It seems like so many people want something for nothing. People do not realize that they are only hurting themselves. The easy way is not always the best way. You reap what you sow.

Hard work builds strong character. When people are taught to work hard and do the job right the first time, they learn something that will be with them for the rest of their lives. People should take some initiative and hold themselves responsible for doing certain things around the house or school. People should be taught to take pride in the quality of their work. In order to be the best, people have to work hard.

Graduates walk out of college with their diplomas and expect someone to just hand them a job and a salary with six digits. They do not want to start at the bottom and work their way up. These people never had to work after school, on Christmas break, or on Saturdays. Parents today give their kids whatever they want and always bail them out of trouble. These people make the worst employees.

A good example of people being lazy is in school. Instead of taking time to study for a test, people find inventive ways to cheat. Cheating is so widely accepted in this day and age that it is the norm. Cheating is caused by a lack of character and work ethic. People must remember that they are the future.

People in the work place today want to do less and less. Computers are doing more work than ever, and people are becoming even lazier. The papers are always full of articles about strikes for more money. They are getting paid to baby-sit machines, and they are complaining about it. These people should have to work in the fields from sun up to sun down like so many people do in other countries around the world.

Unless we as Americans do not start taking pride in what we do and who we become, we are doomed as a nation. Hard work pays off in the long run. It teaches us a sense of self-worth and pride in a job done to the best of our ability. Countries like Japan and China are out-producing us in industry while we strike and walk picket lines over more paid holidays. We need to get back to the basics: work for what we get, and don't expect a hand out.

Where's the Village

Charles Powell III
3rd Place General Essay
Wesson High School

When I turn my television on and start watching a show, the first commercial that comes on is the one with sad, heart-wrenching children in tatters and shabby houses in foreign countries. The missionaries are asking for help and money to help and support these children. I feel for these children—don't get me wrong—but what about the thousands of children in our own country? I don't see nearly as many commercials on the many children that are in foster care, that need good homes, and that are on the street. Who is trying to promote helping them? Where are our people helping our children?

Americans feel like it is our duty to help and take care of other countries and their children. We lose track in being "Good Samaritans""that we forget our own children. There are thousands of children that get trapped in the system of foster care and orphanages, and cases of brothers and sisters being separated because some are too old or need special attention. Well, older kids need love too. The ones that need special attention need the most love. As good "Christians" we are supposed to love everybody, and take care of each other. As good, patriotic Americans we are supposed to take care of our own.

I wonder if there are commercials in other countries on the children here that need help. I am tired of seeing these commercials of children in the other countries and not any of the children in our country. I know those kids need help and so do ours. How can you help clean up someone's house when yours is just as dirty? There is as saying "it takes a village to raise a child." That is a nice saying, but where is the village?

A Drug's Worth

Ryan Baker
Honorable Mention General Essay
Wesson High School

To strengthen the nation's economy based on the strong influence that drugs have on the personal lives of many Americans.

The United States is a country full of corrupt politicians and poor citizens trying to make a living off illegal drugs and the money they produce. The money these illegal drugs make not only pays for the peoples living but it also gives them countless dollars to do with as they please. What if all these millions of dollars being made by drug traffickers and corrupt officials where brought into United States economy? Our economy would flourish beyond all recognition. If all types of illegal drug use were accepted and made legal, the United States would bring in huge amounts of money, open a huge market of imports and exports, keep police and kids out of trouble and off the streets, slow down countless drug killings and gang related incidents, help outcasts gain acceptance, and help decrease the skyrocketing population.

I understand that not all will be happy with this decision, but in the long run for the American economy, it will produce countless dollars and hundreds of new jobs. Drugs are the main internal conflict of today's society. These illegal substances cause many pointless deaths each year because of the desired drug and the money gained from the drug. If drugs where made legal, countless lives would be saved and huge amounts of money could be made in a simple fashion. Normal drug stores would be able to acquire substances such as cocaine, marijuana, and ecstasy, and sell to the public at will. Drug stores could be formed in any place in the country, and money could be brought in through small entrepreneurs or even large corporations buying into the stock of the drugs that are sold.

Not only will these drugs make billions for the United States, they also create thousands of jobs for small time traffickers throughout the country. Jobs for producing the drugs in our own

country, importing the drugs from other countries, and even exporting the drugs to other country who adopt our new way of making profit off of such a global problem. Production jobs would open up new mergers between wealth corporations and the common man of small town America.

I propose that all of the special forces used to combat drug awareness and drug trafficking be completely disbanded. These specially trained, high-ranking soldiers could be used to fight other opposing countries and help uphold our already stumbling economy. Good men and women die on the streets every day for the pointless reason of keeping drugs out of the hands of the American people. Drugs create a more peaceful community; so most cities will not even need a local police service. Legalization will heavily decrease the formation of gangs and high crimes committed by these gangs. Most gang related incidents occur because of drugs. The only rescue organizations that may have to be instated are those of the fire departments, on account of accidental fires from lighting and smoking certain kinds of drugs.

In our community it is socially unacceptable to use, or even be aquatinted with, drugs. With the legalization of drugs, people's lifestyles would dramatically change. Society would openly accept drug users and hopefully accept the drug for themselves. With this newfound freedom of acceptance, the nation would be a more closely knit brotherhood rather than a hardbound utopia following the social norms. Drugs will allow people to experience the diverse groups of people and lifestyles there are in the United States.

With drug legalization in place, the children of tomorrow will be exposed to the drugs at birth and will become highly addicted. The drug dependent children will be the next step in creating a completely overwhelmed nation. The early addiction will force the growing children to pay for more and more drugs creating a larger more prosperous economy. Kids are attracted to drugs by the experiences they bring, but drugs must be bought and sold in such a secretive manner that kids are kept on the streets and brought up to become outcasts of society. Legalization will help keep kids off the streets and in school where the drugs are willingly accepted.

The new proposal of drug legalization will also increase the death rate, decreasing the already high population. With fewer

people fewer resources will be needed to supply to society. Many drugs make the body almost incapable of reproducing. This will lower the birth rate, also decreasing the population.

Drugs are not needed in my lifestyle. It is my personal belief that the body should stay clean of all pollutants. The world should not partake in drug use because it contaminates our lives. Although this may be an adequate answer to many harsh realities, it is my personal belief that the body must be pure in heart and pure in form. This proposal is one of desperate means that can be pursued if need be. I have no need for any type of drug; I am completely satisfied with my life and all of its attributes. The extreme order of this law may become mandatory, but I myself have no problem with death, children, market, money, or crime, so this need not apply to my life.

History of Microcosm, 1973-2003

By Edna Earle Crews

Under the leadership of the late Willie Mae Hamill, Copiah-Lincoln Community College sponsored the first literary competition for high school students in the Copiah-Lincoln Community district and for college students at Co-Lin. Miss Hamill asked Edna Earle Crews, English instructor, to establish and sponsor a literary magazine to publish college writing in the fall issue and to publish winning selections in the "Arts Festival Edition" in the spring.

The *Microcosm* staff presented Volume I, Number 1 of the new magazine in the fall of 1973. Volume I, Number 1 had only 23 pages, and Volume I, Number 2 featured 46 pages of student writing and illustrations. The staff chose the name of the magazine after studying Sherwood Anderson's short story, "The Egg." In the story Anderson shows how the life of a young chicken mirrors the life of a young child. The students decided Microcosm—a little world, miniature universe—would be a good title for the new publication.

The fall of 1981 was the last year for the staff to publish two issues of *Microcosm* annually. To fill the void of only one publication, the staff introduced "Bits & Pieces" in 1982. The introduction to the fall issue 1986-87 of "Bits & Pieces" states: "Because we feel writing should be read, and since it is impossible that all student writing be printed in *Microcosm*, in 1982 the staff also began publishing the unofficial magazine "Bits & Pieces." The publication was not printed professionally but was assembled and duplicated by the students. This began the transition to more student involvement in the editing and designing of the magazine. In 1996 the editorial staffs were preparing *Microcosm* using PageMaker as "copy-ready" for professional printers. In addition they were also setting up "Bits & Pieces" on PageMaker. The students learned skills during this process that helped to expand their abilities beyond the classroom.

During the thirty years of *Microcosm*'s history, Tom Ross has served as the art advisor for the publication. He and his wife Gayle also set up the magazine for publication and instructed

students in learning the computer program.

Under the guidance of Ovid Vickers of East Central Community, Steve Owen of Meridian Community College, Emory Jones of Northeast Community College, and Edna Earle Crews of Copiah-Lincoln Community College, the Mississippi Junior Creative Writing Association became a reality in the fall of 1978. The *Junior College Journal* became the official publication of the organization.

This magazine featured the winning entries of the annual competition held for the junior colleges in the state. Since the magazine's inception, 75 Copiah-Lincoln students representing *Microcosm* have won 102 awards for writing, and four students have won the cover design competition. In the "professionally printed" literary magazine category, *Microcosm* has won 21 awards. "Bits & Pieces" has captured six first place awards.

Since 1984 Copiah-Lincoln has been a member of the Southern Literary Festival which offers writing completion for students in universities, colleges, and community colleges in 8 states in the Southeast. Copiah-Lincoln students have won 14 awards in this competition.

Student writers appearing in *Microcosm*, *"Bits & Pieces," The Junior/ Community College Writer*, and *The Southern Literary Festival Journal* are now doctors, nurses, speech therapists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, veterinarians, ministers, lawyers, judges, teachers, computer specialists, nutritionists, artists, engineers, social workers, administrators, horticulturalists, musicians, and parents.

The library houses bound copies of *Microcosm*, the *Junior/ Community College Writer*, and the *Community College Writer* in the Mississippi Room.